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THE
PAST AND THE PRESENT,
IN THE
SECULAR AND RELIGIOUS HISTORY
OF THE
Congregational Church and Society
OF BRANFORD.
A
SEMI-CENTENNIAL DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED JULY 7th, 1858,

BY THE REV. TIMOTHY P. GILLETT, A. M.,
PASTOR OF THE CHURCH.

NEW HAVEN:
MOREHOUSE & TAYLOR, PRINTERS.
97 CHAPEL STREET.

1858.



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Drawn by N. B. Hall

Engd by J. S. Anderson

Your affectionate Pastor,
T. P. Gillett,

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BRANFORD, Oct. 23, 1858.

TO OUR ESTEEMED PASTOR, THE REV. TIMOTHY P. GILLETT,

Dear Sir,—Believing it would be gratifying and useful to many of the people among whom you have so long and faithfully labored as Pastor, and also to many of your friends in Branford and other places, to have your valuable semi-centennial Discourse in a permanent form, we would respectfully request a copy thereof for publication.

Very affectionately, yours,

AUGUSTUS BLACKSTONE,
NATHANIEL P. MINER.

To MESSRS. BLACKSTONE AND MINER,

Gentlemen,—In compliance with your request I herewith transmit a copy of the Discourse delivered on the 7th of July, 1858, for publication, if you think proper so to do.

Respectfully, yours,

TIMOTHY P. GILLETT.

BRANFORD, Oct. 26th, 1858.

ORDER OF THE EXERCISES.

Reading select portions of Scripture, by Rev. GEORGE I. WOOD.

Singing, 100th Psalm, 2d part. Tune, Denmark.

Prayer, by Rev. GEORGE I. WOOD.

Singing, 78th Psalm, 2d part.

Sermon.

Prayer, by Rev. HENRY ROBINSON.

Singing, 121st Psalm, 4th part. Tune, Lenox.

Benediction.

N. B.—The illness of the Pastor prevented the exercises being held on the 15th of June, as was at first intended.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1858, by

AUGUSTUS BLACKSTONE and NATHANIEL P. MINER,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, for the District of Connecticut.

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DISCOURSE.

PSALM LXXVIII: 2—7.

“**SAYINGS OF OLD, WHICH WE HAVE HEARD AND WHICH OUR FATHERS HAVE TOLD US.—WE WILL NOT HIDE THEM FROM THEIR CHILDREN, SHROWING TO THE GENERATIONS TO COME THE PRAISES OF THE LORD, AND HIS STRENGTH AND HIS WONDERFUL WORKS THAT HE HATH DONE. FOR HE ESTABLISHED A TESTIMONY IN JACOB AND APPOINTED A LAW IN ISRAEL, WHICH HE COMMANDED OUR FATHERS, THAT THEY SHOULD MAKE THEM KNOWN TO THEIR CHILDREN;—THAT THE GENERATION TO COME MIGHT KNOW THEM, EVEN THE CHILDREN WHICH SHOULD BE BORN, WHO SHOULD ARISE AND DECLARE THEM TO THEIR CHILDREN; THAT THEY MIGHT SET THEIR HOPE IN GOD, AND NOT FORGET THE WORKS OF GOD BUT KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS.**

Every attentive reader of the Bible must have observed the frequency with which the inspired writers, or speakers, allude to God's past dealings with the world and the church for the purpose of giving instruction to the present and coming generations. Thus Moses and Joshua, at the close of their ministrations, and among the last labors of life, recount before the people of their charge, the praises of the Lord, his strength and his wonderful works in their behalf. The same course was taken by Samuel when he reproved the Israelites for their ingratitude and called them to repentance. We have similar examples in the writings of David and of Ethan the Ezrahite;—in the sermons of Peter and Paul, and in the defense which Stephen, the martyr, made before the Jewish Council. God's past dealings with the church and with its enemies,—his mercies and his wonders are brought into view to incite men to penitence for sin, and to call forth gratitude for divine favors;—to induce men to fear him and place their hope in him. The text is a striking instance of this kind. The title of the Psalm is, “A Psalm to give Instruction”—and Asaph calls on his people to give ear to it, as though he had said what our Lord afterwards said: “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches.” He was about to

repeat sayings of old, and they were weighty matters, worthy to be transmitted to posterity.

It will be remembered that when God gave his laws, his ordinances and his promises to the ancient church, it was with the solemn charge to teach these things diligently to the children. The church of God and of his Christ is not a provision for one age, any more than a constitution of civil government is an ordinance for one age; but it is to be continued and preserved from generation to generation to the end of the world, subject to amendment or alteration only by the great law giver.

There are then two things of which we are required to obtain correct knowledge, to preserve that knowledge and communicate it to the generation which may come after us. The *first* is the testimony which God has established in Jacob; the law which he has appointed in Israel;—all the doctrines, the precepts, the promises and the privileges which he has given to the church; all the revealed truths which he has connected with the plan of redemption. The second thing is, the leading providences of God concerning these doctrines, truths, promises, and privileges;—whether these providences are those which give prosperity or adversity to the church; whether they relate to seasons of revival,—to the “outpourings of the spirit” and the conversion of sinners, or the periods of declension or diminution. In a word, the history of the church and the religious state of God’s people should be carefully studied and known, and as carefully declared to the present generation, that they may know and understand them, and, in turn, faithfully make them known to their children.

The object of all this is also clearly stated:—“That they might set their hope in God, and not forget his works, but keep his commandments.” This was to be done that they might be induced to imitate the faith and obedience of their pious ancestors, and avoid the sins which are sure to bring divine judgments on the disobedient;—that they might be induced to choose him as their portion and set their hope in him for their own salvation; for their present help in every time of trouble; and for the perpetuation and the prosperity of his church in a world of opposition, of error and ungodliness.

Mr. Scott well remarks: “The truths and precepts and the works of God, which have been recorded and transmitted to us by

our progenitors, form a sacred deposit, which we must hand down to posterity." And who will deny that we are bound to hand it down entire, uncorrupted and even enlarged by our own experience of the dealings of God with his church and with men in our own day.

Having thus alluded to the general purport of this passage of Scripture, I invite your attention while I apply it to the present solemn, and, to me, interesting occasion. The audience are well aware that the speaker has recently completed a pastorate of fifty years among this people. Few of my brethren in the ministry live to see a day like this, and few are the churches or societies which are called to assemble on occasions like this. Owing to removals by death or dismission, the number is small who remain pastors of the same church and congregation for half a century. But, having obtained help from God, I continue among you to this day; and I wish to occupy the passing hours in reviewing the past; considering the present, and directing your thoughts and my own to the future, in reference to our prospects both for this life and that which is to come.

Give ear, then, O my people, to sayings of old; to things which we have heard and known;—things which our fathers have told us; things which the past history and experience of our ancestors and our own knowledge tell us; to judgments and mercies, which have been shown you and your fathers; to the dealings of God with you from the beginning; these let us declare to the children and to the generation yet to come that they may fear God. Let us to-day speak of his strength and his wonderful works towards the people of this town, and, especially, of this church.

The tract of land, which for almost two centuries constituted the town of Branford, was purchased of the town of New Haven, in the year 1644, by colonists or immigrants from Wethersfield. The settlers in New Haven had purchased it of the Indian Sachems in 1638.* Totoket, the original name, seems to have been given

* September 1, 1640. Totoket, or Branford, was granted to the Rev. Samuel Eaton, brother of Theophilus Eaton, Governor of New Haven Colony, provided he obtained a sufficient number of his friends to settle it. He went to England for that purpose, but was persuaded to remain and preach at Durbenfield and Stockport, in England. As he failed of fulfilling his engagement, Branford was sold to Wm. Swain and others, of Wethersfield.

by the Aborigines, to a range of mountains running through the northern part of the town, and from them applied to the whole tract. Its present name is said to have been derived from Brentford, or Burntford—a village in England, near London. Probably some of the first settlers came from that place, who, after residing temporarily in other places, finally fixed their residence here. It does not appear that there were among them any persons of great wealth or superior rank. But they were men of strict Puritan principles,—men of stern integrity and zealous for religious liberty, so far as its principles were then understood. The doctrines of their creed were Calvinistic, or those which were embodied shortly after in the Cambridge and Westminster Confessions of Faith. In church polity they were Congregationalists, holding the doctrine of parity, or of one order in the ministry, and that all ministers are of equal official rank; and that each parochial church is an ecclesiastical body complete in itself, with power to elect its own pastors and deacons,—to decide on the proper qualifications of those who offer themselves for admission to membership with them, and to receive, to discipline and exclude, as the majority shall judge to be agreeable to the laws of Christ, the only head, law-giver and king of the church. They further held to the propriety of asking advice from other churches, reserving the right to follow or reject such advice according to their judgment of expediency. In common with other colonists of that age, they acted on the scheme of carrying the gospel and its ordinances, education and its advantages, with them, and having the church, the minister and the school, coeval with their settlement. It was not with our fathers as it too frequently is with emigrants at the present day; for now it is the world first, and, with many, the world only. They run away from the gospel, the sanctuary and the Sabbath, and the friends of the Redeemer have to carry the gospel and the means of salvation to them, as much as they do to the heathen.

There are no records known to exist showing when a church was organized here, but there are records which show the labors and expenditures of the people to secure these institutions of Christ and the education of the young. So early as the first of October, 1644, the salary of Mr. John Sherman as preacher be-

gan, and the records show that he was remaining here in 1646, though probably not as settled minister.*

The first regular pastor was Abraham Pierson, whose name appears on the Town Records in 1647. He was born in Yorkshire, England, graduated at the University of Cambridge, in the year 1632, and like many others of the first ministers of New England, he was ordained and preached for some years in his native country. He came to New England in 1639, and joined the church in Boston. Shortly after he took up his abode at Lynn, but the next year he removed with a company of emigrants and settled Southampton, on Long Island. This probably was in 1641. This company had been organized into a church, and he was constituted their pastor previously to their removal from Lynn. On finding that the colony of Connecticut claimed jurisdiction over them, he, in 1647, with a part of his congregation, removed to Branford, in the colony of New Haven, and there united with the settlers from Wethersfield. He was pastor of the church here about twenty years. It appears that the settlement received a new impulse from the accession of Mr. Pierson and his associates, and the town continued to prosper and increase;—the people dwelt together in harmony until John Winthrop of the Connecticut Colony obtained from King Charles II. a new charter for Connecticut. That charter included within its limits the colony of New Haven and also New York. New Haven had not been consulted in this arrangement, and the consequences were, long and bitter contentions between the jurisdictions of Connecticut and New Haven. In these controversies, Mr. Pierson, who had acquired great influence among his people, and who was much beloved by them, took sides with Mr. Davenport, of New Haven,

* The Rev. John Sherman was a native of Dedham, Eng., educated at Emmanuel College, came to New England in 1634-5—preached at Watertown, as an assistant to Rev. George Philips, but soon removed to the colony of New Haven. Probably he came with the emigrants from Watertown to Wethersfield, and with the Wethersfield people to Branford, as he was reckoned with them in the division of lands. After preaching at Branford, at Milford, and other places in New Haven colony, he returned and settled at Watertown, where he died in 1685, aged 72. He was a man of superior intellectual endowments; was the best mathematician in the country, and left voluminous manuscripts on the Science of Astronomy. Mr. Sherman was the father of twenty-six children by two marriages.—BABER'S HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS.

against the union ; and so strong were his feelings, that when the event took place, he, with many of his people, resolved to remove from the colony. Arrangements for this purpose were commenced, an agreement made and signed on the 30th of April, 1666, by Mr. Pierson, a part of his congregation, and some prominent individuals from Guilford, New Haven and Milford, which they called "A plantation covenant," the first article of which was as follows :

"That none shall be admitted as free men or free burgesses but such planters as are members of some or other of the congregational churches ; and that none but such be chosen to the magistracy or to carry on any part of civil judicature, or as deputies or assistants ; to have power to vote in establishing laws or repealing them, or to any chief military trust or office."

This was a fundamental principle in nearly all the first settlements of New England ; but Winthrop's charter rejected it, and gave the right of freemen to others besides members of congregational churches. Probably no person, at the present time, will advocate the views of the early settlers of New England on this point ; or justify the wish to vest all civil as well as ecclesiastical power in the church, or rather in those who are members of it ; but it admits of a question whether such a policy would be more disastrous to social improvement and happiness, than the one now so much in vogue with many ;—that evangelical religion disqualifies a man for any civil office. Verily the pendulum has vibrated to the opposite extreme, and if we cannot judge whether it be for the better or the worse,—posterity will.

Mr. Pierson, accompanied by a large part of his flock, left Branford, about June, 1667, and settled in New Jersey, at a place they called Newark, then a wilderness, now a region of cities, of enterprise, of manufactures, of literature, and what is more, of evangelical religion. Whatever faults those settlers had, they certainly had piety and enterprise and sterling worth. The Cranes—the Wards—the Harrisons—the Dodds—and others who left Branford, are names which will not be forgotten. Mr. Pierson, with all his *isms* and his mobility was no mean man. "A man of high character and commanding influence—a godly and learned man" says Gov. Hutchinson, who personally knew him. "A man," says Cotton Mather, "who, wherever he came, he shone." Newark was the *fourth colony* he had planted, or essentially aided

in planting, within twenty-eight years, and there he remained with his people, under a code of laws of his own choice, greatly beloved and honored until his death, on the 9th of August, 1678. His eldest son, afterwards the first President or Rector of Yale College, was for some years, colleague-pastor with his Father. This son was born at Lynn, in 1641, and died at Killingworth, now Clinton, in 1708.

Dr. Trumbull, the "venerable Historian," states that "Mr. Pierson carried away the church and town records of Branford after it had been settled about twenty-five years, and left it almost without inhabitants." That the church records were carried away is probably true; and it has been supposed they are lost. This however is not certain. That Branford was entirely without an organized church and settled minister for about twenty years, is also true. But that Branford was left almost without inhabitants is doubted. Documents will show that there were inhabitants left, and inhabitants who valued the gospel, its truths and ordinances. And the Town Records were not removed.

The same year in which Mr. Pierson left Branford, an instrument was signed by forty-seven freeholders, who remained, affirming their attachment to the congregational order, urging remaining professors to go forward to the settlement of a minister, and promising to aid in his support. Probably a few of these men afterwards removed to Newark, and some of them might have signed the instrument at a later period. The people who were left, acted nobly in manifesting their attachment to the gospel and its institutions; and their firm purpose to adhere to the principles which had inspired and guided them in their first efforts to establish a settlement here. As early as 1669, two years after Mr. Pierson's removal, we find them giving to Mr. John Bowers, as their minister, a salary of £40; one day's work from each freeholder, and furthermore the use of certain tracts of land. There were twenty who voted in this measure, and but twenty-three, including Mr. Pierson, who signed the compact for removing to New Jersey. In 1671, and again in 1673, they gave Mr. Bowers "a call to settle with them for the purpose of carrying on the gospel ministry." This last invitation he accepted, but for reasons now unknown, he was not installed. He was afterwards minister successively at Derby, and at Rye in the province of New York.

From 1680 to 1684 the people, with some interruptions, employed Mr. Samuel Mather, as their minister, and invited him to settle with them as their pastor ; but the "General Court" ordered him away to Windsor, and Mr. Mather obeyed. The people of Branford remonstrated against this interference, but it was in vain.

In 1681, the town unanimously petitioned the General Court for liberty to embody into a church such as were suitable subjects. The request was not granted. October 11th, 1687, they renewed the petition, and leave was given. They had previously given Mr. Samuel Russell, a son of the Rev. John Russell, of Hadley, Mass., and a graduate of Harvard, an invitation to settle with them as their minister, and he had given an answer in the affirmative on the 12th of September, 1687.

The year 1688 forms an important era in the history of this town. After the efforts, trials and discouragements of more than twenty years, during which the people, somewhat like Israel of old, "abode many days without Ephod and without Teraphim," we find them commencing a record of church proceedings under a regular church organization. It begins thus :

"Branford, March 7th, 1687-8. The affernamed embodied in ch'h covenant,

Sam^{ll} Russell, W^m Maltby, Eleazar Stent, Sam^{ll} Pond, Jn^o Frisby, Jn^o Tainter, Peter Tyler." These were the seven pillars. "And the same time adjoined, Dan^l Swain, Aaron Blatchly, Thos Sarjeant, Sam^{ll} Betts, and women : Eliz Barker, Hannah Maltby, Sarai Blatchly, Miriam Pond, Dorcas Tainter, Eliz Stent, Hannah Wheadon, Eliz Pamer, Hannah Frisby, Deliver^e Rose, Mary Betts, Ruth Frisby, Sarai Page, Sarai Gutsill, Jane Tyler." A little band of twenty-six, who laid the foundation of many generations, by whom the gospel, its truths and ordinances, have been perpetuated and spread to the salvation of many.* It would seem

* It may be gratifying to some to cast their eye on the Covenant adopted by the church at its organization, A copy of it follows :

"It having pleased God of his grace to call us up to y^e visible profession of religion, and being now by his providence called to unite together, for y^e carrying on y^e ordinances of God amongst us. We do therefore wth selfabasement and sense of our great unworthiness, yet in obedience to y^e gospel of our Lord Jesus,—We do this day before God and his people give up ourselves and ours first unto God and then one to another to walk together in attendance to all the

that the Lord of the vineyard said of the remnant left after the Exodus of 1667: "Destroy it not for a blessing is in it." In April following, seven more were added to their number, and Mr. Russell was spared to his people through a long and prosperous ministry. Additions were made to the church every year with only five exceptions. The whole number added were 237—96 males, 141 females. The baptisms recorded are 870, of whom only 33 were adults. He left no record of deaths, and only a fragmentary notice of marriages, which commenced in 1716.

There is no record or tradition remaining of any seasons of special attention to religion like those which are now technically called revivals, during his pastorate. The influences of the spirit seemed to descend like the gentle and constant dew rather than in the copious shower; yet there were years marked by accessions which in these days would be deemed fruits or indications of a revival. In 1701, there were fifteen additions to the church. The same number in 1714, and in 1715 there were twenty-six. Mr. Russell's ministry closed with his life, June 25th, 1731. He died at the age of seventy-one. His pastorate was forty-three years and three months, and was obviously a useful one. For the last six years of his life his health was such that he was able to preach but little if any. The society cheerfully employed an assistant, and continued Mr. Russell's salary until June 1730, when, with his consent, they voted to give him, during life, the income or use of certain society's lands on Indian Neck, his firewood and thirty pounds salary. He lived about a year after this arrangement. He was a man of more than ordinary talents, and was highly respected by his ministerial brethren. He took an active part in forming and introducing into the churches that ecclesiastical code or formula, usually called The Saybrook Platform or Confession of Faith. He was one of the leaders in those movements which resulted in the establishment of Yale College; and it was in his own dwelling,—in the large south parlor, with its small windows, which some of you and myself well remember,

duties and enjoyment of all the privileges of the cov^t of grace, that are to be attended and enjoyed in particular visible ch'hs,—making the script^e to be our rule. We do declare it to be o^r purpose (as God shall assist,) both in our principles and practice in all substantials, to walk in a consonance wth y^e ch'hs of Christ wth whom we hold communion.

that the convention of ministers met, bringing their donation of books, and founded the institution, which, from such a feeble infancy, has grown to its present strength, and which is wielding a mighty influence throughout the land and over the world. He was one of the trustees from 1701 to 1731.

During his pastorate, the inhabitants of the town became too numerous and too widely dispersed to be accommodated in one meeting house, and in 1725, the town was amicably divided into two parishes. The North Farms received the name of North Branford, and the southern part was called the Old or South Society. The church was also divided; and though no record is known to exist of the names, the number, or the location of those who were dismissed from the old to form the new church, yet no reasonable doubt exists that *location* was the basis of the division. The North Farms had enjoyed the privilege of a separate meeting—more or less of the time, especially in the winter season—for nearly twenty-five years, previous to this division. In process of time, the North Society found it convenient to divide, and the church in Northford, or the third church in Branford, was organized. All these movements were made in friendship and harmony. They went out from us, not because they were not of us, but because they needed room. The friendship and harmony, —the kind Christian intercourse and confidence between these churches and their pastors has never been seriously interrupted, and it is still the growth and increase of the little band who adjoined to the seven pillars on the 7th of March, 1687-8, and who in every age have been sending forth their sons and daughters to strengthen and bless other churches and communities throughout the land.

But I have somewhat departed from the order of events. After several unsuccessful efforts to obtain a pastor, the South Society in Branford gave an invitation to Mr. Philemon Robbins, of Cambridge, to settle with them in the gospel ministry. The invitation was given October 9th, 1732. He signified his acceptance of it on the 27th of December, and was ordained on the 7th of February following, forty-five years wanting one month after the re-organization of the church.

"The Rev. Mr. Samuel Whittlesey, of Wallingford, made the first prayer, and preached a sermon from Ezekiel iii, 17, 18, 19. Then

the Rev. Mr. Jacob Hemingway, of East Haven, made a prayer and gave me the charge ; then the Rev. Mr. Samuel Russell, of North Guilford, made a prayer ; then the Rev. Mr. Isaac Stiles, of North Haven, gave me the right hand of fellowship ; then I named the Psalm 118th, 4th part, and gave the blessing." I quote the record to show the customs of that day, and the style in which ministers are spoken of.

Mr. Robbins was a son of Nathaniel Robbins, and grandson of Nathaniel Robbins, who emigrated from Scotland, and settled in Charlestown, Mass. He graduated at Harvard College in 1729. "During his ministry at Branford, he experienced more than the ordinary vicissitudes of the pastoral life,"—was highly and deservedly popular with the great majority of his people. He died suddenly, while sitting in his study chair, on the 13th of August, 1781, in the seventy-second year of his age, and forty-ninth of his ministry. The testimony is that he had preached as usual on the Sabbath previous to his death. According to his own records, the number of church members, at the time of his ordination, was 125 ; 43 males, 82 females. The additions during his ministry were 204 ; 68 males, 136 females. The baptisms administered among his own people were about eleven hundred.

Though there was some religious excitement here in connection with the labors of Tenant and Davenport, little permanent fruit for good was produced. As it was in the ministry of Mr. Russell, so additions were made to the church yearly from 1733 to 1779, with the exception of five years. The greatest number was in 1733, when 28 were added, and in 1734, when 15 united with the church. It should be borne in mind that his ministry included the periods of the French wars, and the war of the Revolution,—seasons peculiarly unfavorable to the prosperity of the church and of vital piety. This may in part account for the small increase of the church ; or rather a small decrease of its numbers.

But the most extraordinary feature in the sayings and *doings* of old which occurred during his ministrations, was the attempt made to depose and silence him for heresy, or new light-ism. I cannot detail that history now. Trumbull has done it in part. Suffice it to say the Legislature had passed an act making it a penal offense for one minister to preach or administer gospel ordinances in

another minister's parish without his consent. The penalty was the forfeiture of salary. Mr. Robbins ventured to transgress, or to do what was construed to be a transgression of the statute, by preaching to some persons known as Baptists in the outskirts of Wallingford. This was done at their earnest and repeated solicitations. He also preached for the Separates at Haddam and Middlefield, and baptized some individuals among them. For these doings, and for some alleged errors in doctrine, he was arraigned on the complaint of a few of his people who were instigated by persons from without, and after a protracted trial of two years, and much agitation, he was formally deposed from the ministry. His church and people now took the case into their own hands. Instead of using the liberty which the law of the Legislature gave them, they paid their minister's salary with more cheerfulness and punctuality than before. Instead of admitting the charges of error filed against him before consociation, the church, *nem. con.*, met and rebutted them thus: "We are of opinion that what is contained in the articles against the pastor of this church, respecting doctrine and principles, is very wrongfully and injuriously charged, and disagreeable," contrary to "the known course and tenor of his preaching. We think Mr. Robbins preaches the doctrines of grace more clearly than in some of the first years of his ministry among us; and yet we have too much reason to fear that our uneasy brethren and neighbours, especially some of the principal of them, are dissatisfied on account of those doctrines: which doctrines, for our part, we think are clearly revealed in the word of God, and adhered to by the reformed churches, as appears by their confessions of faith and catechisms; and we trust God has and will implant them in our hearts, and enable us to maintain them as long as we live." No very pleasant decision for such men as Whittlesey and Stiles, who, twenty-three years before, had ordained and given the right hand of fellowship to young Robbins, and whose new light was now so brilliant as to give pain to their visual organs. He was ecclesiastically silenced and deposed. His flock would not submit. They voluntarily withdrew from the compact into which they had entered with the neighboring churches about thirty-eight years before. They retained their minister and loved him the more for his trials and his increased soundness in the faith. His opponents appealed

to the Assembly for aid to quell or to awe this rebellious spirit. The Assembly, in May, 1748, cited the Society to appear before them and answer to the complaint. The Society appointed John Russell, Esq., and Samuel Barker to be their agents or attorneys, to appear before the Assembly and show reasons why the prayer of said petition should not be granted. The Assembly, after hearing the parties, appointed a council of seven ministers from different parts of the colony, requesting them to repair to Branford, and hear the parties, and endeavor to make peace in the Society. On hearing the decision of the Assembly, the Society here voted to request and entreat the ministers so appointed by the Assembly, together with messengers from their respective churches, to meet at Branford, on Wednesday, the 29th of June, 1748. But the council never met. Though requested again in July—that they would *be pleased* to come and attend to the business of their appointment, they came not. Being let alone, the difficulties died out. The days of Mr. Robbins were thenceforth spent in peace with his people,—in the love and confidence of his church and of the whole community. Without any formal act of restoration, he was called gradually into the councils and associations of his brethren.

He was a man of popular rather than splendid talents. He usually preached from short notes or skeletons; is said to have been a ready extemporizer and of uncommon gifts in prayer. God carried the church and society through this storm and saved them from the errors and fanaticism which so fearfully scathed some sections of New England, under the wild extravagances of Davenport and other itinerants. “Destroy it not for a blessing is in it.”

Hitherto there had been but one denomination of Christians in Branford. Through all this period, the only church organization was the Congregational. Some Episcopalians there undoubtedly were among the early settlers, and some whose preferences were for that form of Christianity; but they either worshipped with the Congregationalists, or went abroad for baptism and confirmation. They lived in harmony with Mr. Robbins, and, in some instances, as one of their number informed me, applied to him to baptize a child, and were satisfied with the validity of baptism so administered.

But another feature of our ecclesiastical history is now to be delineated. After several unsuccessful attempts to obtain some person to settle with them, the church and society gave a call to Mr. Jason Atwater, a native of Hamden, and a graduate of Yale College.* The vote was not unanimous, and the council which convened for the purpose of his ordination, judged it inexpedient to proceed, and adjourned without ordaining him. This council, the Consociation, met on the 17th of February, 1784. Both the church and society renewed the call on the 5th of March, 1784, and on the 10th Mr. Atwater was ordained by the Consociation, but neither the church nor society were unanimous. Some of the dissatisfied persons withdrew from the society, and uniting with others, an Episcopal society was organized June 2d, 1784. They met for religious services occasionally in private houses, until May, 1786, when the first Episcopal church edifice was erected, and so far completed as to be occupied for divine worship. It was not consecrated until September 17, 1832. In building, they were aided to some extent by persons of the Congregational society, and the two denominations have moved onward in comparative harmony, undisturbed, except by the claims of the Episcopalian to a part of the lands purchased of the Indians and sequestered for the use of the first Congregational society in Brantford, in supporting the ministry of the gospel among them. In other respects the ministry of Mr. Atwater seems to have been one of peace and ordinary prosperity. The society gave him £300 as a settlement and £100 as a yearly salary. According to his records, there were sixty members in the church when he took the oversight thereof. Perhaps there were a few more who, as non-residents, were not enumerated, or who had been received during the vacancy between Mr. Robbins' death and his own ordination. During his pastorate seventy-eight were added to the church; forty-three of them in the first year of his ministry. The baptisms one hundred and eighty-seven. He died of consumption, June 10th, 1794, after a pastorate of ten years and three months.

* The first call of the society was given on the third Monday of November, 1783; a second vote, renewing the invitation, was passed on the 8th of December. The vote of the church is dated December 9th, 1783.

On the 20th of July, 1795, the society "voted to extend a call to Mr. Lynde Huntington to settle with them in the work of the gospel ministry." The church concurred in the invitation on the 7th of August following. The offer made him was £300 settlement, £95 yearly salary, and firewood sufficient for his own use, "so long as he shall continue to preach in said society." The votes were unanimous. He accepted the call, and was ordained Oct. 28, 1795. Mr. Huntington was a native of Norwich; he graduated at Yale College in 1788. His talents were of a superior order,—or as Dr. Trumbull, who knew him well, once remarked to the speaker, he stood next to the first man in the Association, and bade fair for eminence and usefulness. He entered on his work with earnestness; with a plainness in preaching and personal fidelity, which, as some of my hearers may still remember, commended him to their consciences, though it might have been unwelcome to unrenewed hearts. He was strongly attached to the doctrines and practice of the Puritans, and at the very commencement of his ministry, the church united with him in setting wholly aside the practices of what has, not unaptly, been termed "*The Halfway Covenant*,"—language which perhaps the juvenile part of my hearers do not understand, while we who are older almost wonder that the practice ever gained currency in evangelical churches. It was in substance this: Baptized persons, of good moral character, though they considered themselves unregenerate and unqualified to come to the Lord's Supper, were allowed to enter into covenant with the church, place themselves under its watch, and offer their children for baptism if they chose; but were not expected to come to the communion until they expressed repentance and faith in Christ, or gave satisfactory evidence of a change of heart. This practice, which I believe was introduced into Connecticut by the church in Hartford, and which, for more than a century, was a very common one, had gradually gone into disuse in this church, and throughout the Congregational churches; yet when it was formally set aside, it caused some dissatisfaction, not in the church, but in the society. The highly Calvinistic tone of Mr. Huntington's preaching disturbed some also; and the result was that a few withdrew and united with the Episcopalians, or removed from the place.

Mr. Huntington's ministry was closed by his death, of con-

sumption, Sept. 20, 1804. His pastorate was eight years and eleven months. The additions to the church, under his ministry, were forty-eight—eleven males and thirty-seven females. The baptisms were one hundred and twenty-one. The aged still remember and revere him.

[The speaker here paused, while the congregation united in singing the 71st Psalm, L. M., four stanzas.]

Lord, I have put my trust in thee ;
 Turn not my confidence to shame ;
 Thy promise is a rock to me ;
 A tower of refuge is thy name.

Thou hast upheld me from the womb ;
 Thou wert my strength and hope in youth ;
 Now trembling, bending o'er the tomb,
 I lean upon thine arm of truth.

Though I have long outliv'd my peers,
 And stand amid the world alone,
 A stranger left by former years,
 I know my God, by him are known.

Cut me not off in mine old age,
 Forsake me not in life's last hour :
 The foe has not forgot his rage,
 The lion ravens to devour.

Up to this period the people of Branford had retained, far beyond many, the habits of puritan simplicity and plainness in furniture, dress, and modes of living ; and they were considered as somewhat behind the age in modern improvement and progress. The state of society was less artificial, formal and heartless, than in the more modernized habits of intercourse between man and his neighbor.

There now occurred a vacancy in the pastoral office of three years and nine months. During this interval the people employed many candidates, but gave to only one—Bennet Tyler—an invitation to settle, and he declined accepting it. On the second Monday of December, 1807, the society passed a vote directing their committee to supply the pulpit with some person at the expense of the society. The tradition is that they were directed to employ some one who had never preached here, because they were already divided into parties, in consequence of the numerous can-

didates who had supplied them. The next morning, at an early hour, application was made to me, a perfect stranger to every individual in the parish. On the second day of January, which was as soon as as a previous engagement would permit, I came among you, and, having obtained help from God, I have continued here to this day ; if not a wonder to many, I am to myself. I have outlived almost all my peers, and all save one both of ministers and delegates who composed the venerable council which ordained me. The vote of the church, at a meeting held April 8th, 1808, acquiescing and joining in a previous call of the society, made me to settle with them in the work of the ministry, was represented as unanimous. The invitation of the society, offering a salary of \$500 annually, and the privilege of cutting firewood on the society's lands, until from continued ill health or infirmity, I was no longer able to perform the duties of a gospel minister among you, was passed with four dissentients. These afterwards became cordial friends. On the 15th of June, 1808, my ordination took place, and this flock was solemnly committed to my care. My duty was not to know anything among you save Christ and him crucified ; and I hope it has been a controlling object to fulfil that duty. In preaching, I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. How far the word of truth has been rightly divided, and how far each one, old and young, has had his appropriate portion given in due season, the Master will judge. I have great reason to be humble for my unfaithfulness and deficiencies, and to ponder solemnly, with the deepest feelings of soul, on the inquiry, Have any of this people perished in consequence of my being a minister of the gospel here ? Have all been saved, who might have been saved, if their minister had been more faithful with them ? I have been with you, my beloved people, in weakness and fear and much trembling. True, we have lived in outward peace and harmony. Nothing which has occurred has produced any outbreaks between us as pastor and church ; minister and society. And if an individual has occasionally taken umbrage at my conduct, or from any cause been alienated, I believe that in nearly every case the alienation or the hostility has died away, and usually friendship has succeeded. I know not that one unfriendly feeling now exists.

* * * * *

At the time of my ordination, there were some things favorable to a peaceful and successful ministry, and some unfavorable and forbidding. Among favorable circumstances, besides the harmony and unanimity of the call, the important labors of my predecessor, Mr. Huntington, had prepared the way for peace. He had been sowing precious seed, and it was ready to spring up and bear fruit. The battle between the doctrines of grace and the laxer creed of the Arminians, had been fought and won. Those who disliked the doctrinal sentiments of the Puritans, and their simple modes of worship, had withdrawn, and your present pastor has found no let or molestation in preaching doctrines or duties as found in our standards of Faith and the word of God. No one has ever whispered in his ear, "You must not preach this or that doctrine, lest you give offence and cause division."

Among things unfavorable was a habit,—still too frequent,—of neglecting public worship in unpleasant weather, I well remember that the third Sabbath of my preaching here, was in a slight degree stormy, and no occurrence, from that hour to this, has more disheartened me than the thin attendance in the house of God on that day; and had not previous engagements required my stay, I should, in despondency, have left at once; under the prospect, if I remained here, of having to speak to empty seats whenever the atmosphere was cloudy.

Again; the small number of professors in the church was an unfavorable circumstance. True, there were ninety-seven members, resident and non-resident, and among them twenty-nine males, but they were mostly aged, and there had been no revivals of religion here for many years. The great work of 1799 did not reach this people; nor, in fact, this region, unless Guilford was an exception. I found but two members, if my recollections are correct, who were personally acquainted with special seasons of the effusions of the Holy Spirit; one aged widow, hopefully converted under the preaching of Whitefield, at Wethersfield, and one younger in life, a subject of the work in Northington, now Avon, 1799. At the time of my ordination, there were revivals in New Haven, East Haven and Guilford, and they were of great power. They materially changed the religious and moral aspect of those communities. But this place,

throughout the whole period, remained unmoved. We were much as the royal Psalmist wished the mountains of Gilboa might be, without rain or dew. And as tradition reported, though incorrectly, that there had been opposition to Mr. Whitefield here, the remark made respecting Litchfield, by its minister, or by Tapping Reeve, would sometimes recur to our minds. The people there had opposed Whitefield's coming among them to preach, and the remark was, that there was no revival in Litchfield until the last of his opposers was dead. The inquiry was, might it not be so with this people. For long years, the blessing was withheld from us. But we have reason, with deep humility and gratitude to praise the God of all grace that it was not always and wholly withheld. During the first six years of my pastorate, there were additions to the church every year,—few indeed, and without any general interest on the subject. There have since been eight periods of more than the usual manifestations of Divine grace in the awakening and hopeful conversion of men. First, in 1814, there was a partial revival, twelve only were added to the church, but several of the subjects made a profession afterwards. In 1819—20, there were twenty-two additions; in 1821—22, there were fifty-two additions; in 1831, there were seventy-two; in 1840, there were fifteen; in 1842, there were twenty-three; in 1851, there were seventy. The present year there have been forty-nine.

The whole number added by profession since my ordination is 409. The present number of members is 231. (The records show 1,000 additions in 170 years, or since the reorganization.) The number of baptisms among you, 584—minors, 482; adults, 102. I have performed 306 marriages, attended more than 750 funerals. The whole number of deaths on my record 1,166.

I will here briefly allude to three other events which have materially changed your ecclesiastical relations and prospects.

One is the introduction of a new Constitution of civil government, permitting every person to withdraw from any ecclesiastical society, with which he had been previously connected, merely on certifying his intentions to the clerk of the society; and further providing that no one, coming of age after the adoption of that constitution, shall be a legal member of any ecclesiastical society until he joins it by a formal act. Many,

taking advantage of the constitution, withdrew from the society, and some from public worship ; and many who have since come of age, have joined no society, though they may be holders of pews and worshippers with us. This fact, though it has not diminished the numbers of our Sabbath congregations, has greatly diminished the legal numbers of the society.

The *second* change to which I alluded is the rise and organization of the Baptist church and society, which occurred in or about 1839.

The *third* is the great change in the employment of the people, and consequent changes in the population. Fifty years ago, this was essentially an agricultural community. Your hills and plains were owned and cultivated by farmers, with three or four merchants in a small way, and mechanics enough to supply the wants of the people, and some seafaring men, who, if not youth, had generally homesteads and lands of their own. Now, while the cultivation of the land has greatly increased, manufacturing of various kinds has been introduced, and with it a population less stable. Some of these men and their families are among our most estimable citizens. Another part are without dwellings of their own ; changing their abodes as the prospects of business vary, and many of them disinclined to connect themselves with any religious organization—not a few of them connected with a religious hierarchy, hostile to the faith, the religion, and all the principles of the Puritans.

Let us now look at some other changes which have come over this place since its settlement, and especially within the last half century.

The Aborigines are all gone. Your ancestors were surrounded by Indians, and mingled with them daily; but the proud, independent people of the forest have dwindled away. I remember the last of them, and the only one who lived here when I came, Lydia, in her lone wigwam, was all. I have seen her once or twice at the week day lecture, sitting at the door and listening to the preacher, but she was away with the last prayer. She died at the age of 68.

There is, I believe, no record or tradition that the Branford Indians made war on our people, or offered any violence to them. Their lands were bought and paid for, besides the price

paid to New Haven for the township, and the town passed laws protecting them in all their rights, and prohibiting individuals from purchasing their reservations, lest fraud should be practiced on them. The forest and the thicket have been cleared away, and the lands brought under cultivation. It is no longer the crooked footpath and the *blazed* line of trees by which our fathers wended their way from settlement to settlement, or from the rustic home to the house of God,—but generally the open, and frequently the well made highway, by which the intercourse of neighbor with neighbor is kept up, your produce carried to the market, and “the tribes go up to the sanctuaries.” I wonder not that our fathers, where they could, avoided the thicket and the swamp, through fear of a lurking foe; but I have, a thousand times wondered, as I passed some close copse or dell, and paused to think on the amazing goodness of their covenant God in protecting them from death, when for miles together their way was all through copses and thickets, and where, within ten feet from their path, or from the borders of their fields, an enemy, who delighted in stratagem and surprise, might lie or stand in perfect concealment.

And how vastly has the product of your lands increased. The overplus has increased five, if not tenfold, within the last fifty years.

With your maratime interests it has not been so. The time was, and that within the memory of men living when I came here, when the shipping business and the West India trade from Branford were greater than from New Haven. The harbor here was better and safer. The Dutch, sagacious and enterprising, had discovered this long before Daniel Swain, of Wethersfield, and his company bought Totoket. They had also established a trading house here, and opened a lucrative traffic with the Indians. Their location is still known as Dutch House Point and Dutch House Quarter. But the people of Branford met with great reverses in the old French wars. Their ships were captured or lost, their spirit of enterprise broken, and the improvements made in New Haven harbor gradually removed the shipping business from this place.

Branford has long been noted for producing good seamen; but many of them were lost in the war of 1756, and more in the war of the Revolution, by capture, sickness and exposure

in the prison ships. I may here remark, that most of the people of the South Society, as well of the North, entered with ardor into the war of the Revolution, and furnished a full quota of men, by voluntary enlistment, both for land and sea service.

I have spoken of improvement in roads: the change is still greater in the modes of conveyance. Fifty years ago the common mode of conveyance was on horseback. There were then but four or five ordinary chaises in the place, and one of these without a top—two, or possibly three, double horse wagons,—one single wagon and one truck, and that I believe was the whole list. I leave you to fancy how the people went to the house of God, for they did go thither, and that in far greater proportion, if not with more devout feelings, than the people go now, with all their increased facilities. I need not repeat what my brother* here, from North Branford, has so well told in his discourse on the early settlement of that town. One thing, however, if I mistake not, he has omitted, “the Sabbath day houses” of early times, and even of our own recollections. These were little buildings put up on the skirts of the public green, and in some instances, as was the case here, hard by the house of God, single or double, and designed to accommodate one or more families. Sometimes a kind of patriarchate, and the whole family circle of two or three generations spent the intermission of the Lord’s day in them. Here the provisions were deposited in the morning; in the winter season a good fire made,—the light refreshment eaten at noon,—and then the Bible, or some approved sermon book, produced and read; or perhaps the doctrines and principles of the morning discourse discussed. Possibly some one of less serious mood might talk with his neighbor of worldly matters, or the news of the day, but these family gatherings, in those small, unpainted, unpretending houses, were far more in accordance with the idea of remembering the Sabbath day to keep it holy, than some of the gatherings of the present day, when modern progress has swept away these appendages of our earthly courts.

Look at the changes in education. It will be remembered that our fathers carried with them the school as well as the

* Rev. George I. Wood, who was present and offered the introductory prayer.

church,—the school master as well as the minister. The principle was,—a common school education for every child. At first there was but one school, and that supported in part by the town. In some cases the person employed to preach was also employed to teach the school. Probably three or four months in the year was deemed sufficient to acquire the necessary education. As the settlements spread, schools were multiplied. Half a century ago there were five districts in the South Society, and five indifferent school houses. Reading, writing and arithmetic were taught. That was all which the law required to entitle school societies to a share of the public money. There were no select, or grammar schools, until your present pastor commenced one. You have now eight districts, and ordinarily one, sometimes two, select schools. The requisite qualifications of teachers have been increased, and the branches in which pupils are taught are quite sufficiently multiplied for utility. But I feel constrained to say this great subject has been too much neglected, and that it is still undervalued. Bransford has raised but few publicly educated men. Northford, the younger daughter, has in this far excelled the parent.

There have been great changes in the style of living. The Puritan simplicity which prevailed here fifty years ago, has nearly disappeared from your dwellings, your furniture and your wardrobes. In many cases the changes are for the better, in some cases they are, at least, of doubtful utility. In your dwellings, or rather the dwellings of your fathers, there were no carpets,* no mahogany or rosewood furniture besides a few antique articles, which perhaps came originally from the mother country, and which had, in some instances, been handed down from generation to generation. Now all your houses are carpeted, and your furniture and wardrobes are quite expensive enough, and gorgeous enough for those who wish to live in Christian simplicity, and within their income.

In your dwelling houses there have been great changes. Many of the ancient ones have been taken down and replaced by others greatly improved in style and accommodations, and many new ones erected, exhibiting both an appearance of

* Since the discourse was delivered, the writer has been informed that in one parlor a Brussels carpet was placed, in the year 1807.

thrift and an improvement of taste. There has been an almost entire change in the mode of warming your dwellings. Fifty years ago there were no stoves in use here, except one or two called Franklins, for stores. They began to come into use about forty years ago; large in size, uncouth in appearance, and withal expensive. Their use now is all but universal. Their patterns often ornamental, their conveniences increased, and the expense diminished threefold.

There have been great changes and improvements in church edifices. The Episcopalians have taken down the former ill proportioned one, which had become too strait for them, as well as distasteful, and erected a larger, more modern, and more expensive building, on our right hand. The Baptists have erected a new and commodious one on our left. Our own well remembered edifice, after having served the church, the society and the town, for a century, has disappeared, and you, my people, have been able to erect the present building for the worship of our God and our fathers' God. The enterprise was undertaken and has been carried through with uncommon harmony and satisfaction,—and with the rents of the present year, your debts will be cancelled. The cost has been about \$9,000, and you as a society, or perhaps I should rather say, as a church and a congregation worshipping with us, and one in sentiment and heart with us; you have far greater ability than you had fifteen years ago to build another house, beautiful, convenient and well proportioned, like this.

I will not weary your patience by speaking at length of your former church edifices. This is the *fifth*. The first was erected within the old burying ground, and tradition says it was enclosed by a stoccade to protect its worshippers from the Indians. The three others have been erected on this eminence—a location beautiful in itself, and capable, at a little expense and good taste, of being made far more so.

A few words as to your burying grounds, where sleep the first settlers and their descendants through all these generations for two hundred and fourteen years,—where sleep those who laid here the foundations of liberty and education and religious institutions,—where sleep almost all who took part in my settlement, and who constituted the fathers, the mothers and elders of the flock given me in charge to feed and to take the over-

sight thereof,—where sleep all except four who were members of the church at that period, and only one of them now belongs to us. I, of course, would not deny that some have removed and have died abroad. These hallowed resting places of the dead need your consideration and your care, for there, or in similar narrow and long homes, we too must lie and moulder and rest until the resurrection.

From the first settlement of the town until the 30th of November, 1810, the centre burying ground was the only one where the people of the South Society buried their dead, and probably, for about eighty years, the only one in the town. Here lie the remains of Mr. Russell, of his companion and his flock; indeed, of all your former pastors and their wives, except Mr. Pierson. From this spot, so full of the dust of the dead, will rise your pastors, with many of their people, and meet at the judgment seat, each one to give his account unto God. But not all will rise from this spot. Some who dwelt here, and were members of this church or society, have their resting place in the ocean or the battle field; and Branford men and women will rise to the judgment of the great day from every State and territory of this vast republic. Persons who were once of my flock, are now scattered throughout the land. But the trumpet of the archangel will bring us all before God.

On the above named 30th of November, the burying yard on Mill Plain was opened, and a young man, Ammi Beach, aged twenty, was buried there. On the 18th of June, 1812, the first grave in Damascus burying ground was opened, and again a youth in years, though a married person, Mrs. Lucretia Day, aged nineteen, was buried. How rapidly have these sequestered spots been filling up, while the central one has been twice enlarged! These hallowed grounds need a more tasteful culture.

I am reminded, this day, that not only the church members but the members of the society who constituted my early charge, are mostly with the dead. Of persons then in the marriage relation, only four couples remain unbroken, and only two of them have belonged to this society. Of men belonging to us, who had been previously married, seven yet survive. Of females, twelve. In my attendance on almost eight hundred funerals, I have been called, in seasons of bereavement and mourning, into nearly all your families, except those who are

young, and thus I have been called to share in your sorrows as well as your joys. I have witnessed suffering and death in almost every form except murder.

During my ministry, I have written nearly four thousand sermons, besides hundreds, perhaps thousands, of unwritten and extempore discourses, and a reference to my Bible shews that texts have been selected from every book in the sacred volume. Thus I have not shunned, intentionally, to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

In conclusion, then, we have these results. During these fifty years, notwithstanding all reverses and misfortunes, you have increased in property and conveniences and ability to support religious institutions. In some features, the church has greatly changed. There then was not a male in it under thirty-four years of age, nor a female under twenty-seven years. Now one-third of the members are young, and some under twenty years of age. Among the male members of the church, fifty years ago, there were but three who ever assisted me at our lectures or religious conferences, though I have heard others of them pray in their families. Now it is far otherwise. Then there was no religious literature or religious papers for the young, or for families, except the Connecticut Evangelical Magazine, at that time in its infancy, and Hannah More's Moral Tracts. Such helps every family and every child may now have. There were no missionary societies except those for home missions, and it was thought a very generous thing to raise by contribution ten dollars a year to aid in sending the gospel to our new settlements in Vermont, or a few miles west of the North River. Now the friends of Christ work for his cause through collections for Foreign Missions, Bible and Tract, and Seaman's Friend Societies, and other organizations, and instead of ten dollars, this people have, in some years, raised hundreds—though, painful to say, there has been recently a sad falling off, and what is done is done by comparatively few. There are too many who do not yet know "That it is more blessed to give than to receive."

I rejoice and thank my God, that you have so far prospered in your worldly interests and spiritual concerns. The number of professing Christians in this church has more than doubled—notwithstanding large and almost yearly emigrations. And be-

sides these, there are large numbers in the Episcopal and Baptist churches. The professed disciples of Christ have increased in far greater proportion than your Protestant population. And so it has been in the congregations around us. I thank those of you, both of the church and society, who have co-operated with me and gone along with me,—some from the very beginning of my ministry,—hand in hand to the present hour. I gratefully acknowledged the cordiality and readiness with which you have welcomed me to your houses and your hospitalities during these fifty years; and it has ever been my lot to be affectionately and kindly welcomed by Episcopalians, as well as my own people. You have borne with my imperfections and errors, and we have no bitter contentions to regret here to-day as we review the past, and think of the future solemn meeting, and of what the results of that meeting may be to each of us.

May the great head of the church, who has cared for you hitherto, direct you in your choice of a future pastor, to a good man, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith, and through his ministrations may much people be added to the Lord. I know that the public taste in respect to preaching has much changed; and that societies and churches too have changed in their demands for ministerial qualifications. A committee from the church, or society, or frequently an individual of his own accord, now-a-days, goes to the professors of a theological seminary, or to some prominent minister, and inquires for a candidate. One is recommended. Then commences a string of interrogations: 1st. Is he a popular man and a good speaker? 2d. Has he pleasant social qualities? 3d. Is he a man of superior talents—a smart man? 4th. Can he live on a small salary? And lastly, when all these are satisfactorily answered, with hat in hand and foot on the threshold,—I suppose, Sir, he is pious! Need it excite any surprise that mutations in the pastoral office are frequent, if piety in a minister is the last qualification which parishes, and even churches, seek?

Give your minister an honorable support, that he may not be burdened with care for the things of this life, and constrained to attend to your work instead of his own. You have given me all which it was stipulated to give, and which was thought fifty years since to be sufficient to support a small family; and though the expenses of living have been doubled, my salary has

remained the same. I have asked no more, and my people have offered no more, though for the last twenty years my expenditures have probably exceeded my salary.

I have a few words to say to the members of the church. You have all come into the church during my pastorate, and I regard you as the seals of my ministry. Some of you have been my pupils in secular branches of education, as well as in the bible class. A few of you have grown old along with your pastor, and more of you in younger years have cheered him on in his work. I rejoice in the hope that you may live to comfort and help some future pastor, and, for a long time to come, aid in sustaining all the interests of Zion here. * * * * *

Ye young disciples, be earnest, sincere, whole-hearted Christians. Cherish the great doctrines of the Bible as they have from the beginning been held by this church. Sustain all the institutions of the church. Patronize the benevolent institutions which have for their object the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom in the earth, and the social, moral and religious welfare of man. Aim to do good and not evil in your day ; and while you cherish the spirit of catholicism, and welcome to your communion all professing Christians, of every name, who hold to the great doctrines of experimental religion, as this church has long and ever done,—forsake not the foundation of the prophets and apostles,—the great principles of salvation by grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, and the renewal of the heart by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Would that I could see all of this beloved flock openly on the Lord's side,—all of you professing and consistent Christians ; but the Lord hath not granted this desire of his servant. There are some of the congregation who are not indulging hope that they are renewed persons. I acknowledge your friendship for me ; the support and the sympathy which some of you have manifested in times which have tried men's souls. I trust you will not deny that I have aimed to win you to Christ ; that I have urged duty upon you, and besought you to be reconciled to God ; and it is painful to leave you without being able to count you as seals of my ministry, or as a part of my crown of rejoicing, if, through the infinite mercy of God, I should not be a castaway, but be found, at last, a sinner saved by grace. Would that I could truly say I have faithfully used all appropriate

means to win you to Christ, and that if any perish I am free from their blood. But I have to plead forgiveness for my sins and "short comings;" and though I must leave you impenitent and classed with the world, allow me still to plead with you to submit yourselves unto God, and to plead with God that even yet divine mercy may reach you, and that from other ministrations, and other lips, the preaching of Christ and him crucified may avail to your salvation. You surely form a precious part of the flock, endeared to me by a thousand recollections,—endeared by the thought that you have so often and so long been seen in the house of God, enjoying the means of salvation ; and my heart's desire and prayer to God is that you may be saved, by embracing Jesus Christ, so freely offered to you.

I see another class in the congregation to whom I would affectionately speak a parting word. There are some living among us who have not connected themselves with any religious society. I have occasionally been with you, especially in your seasons of sickness and bereavement, and to no part of the community have I more cheerfully and gladly extended ministerial services than to you, and I can bear witness that you have never manifested any feelings of unfriendliness towards me ; that you have often welcomed me to your houses ; have expressed yourself grateful for my attentions ; have respectfully listened to my counsels, and permitted me to speak freely to you of your spiritual concerns. I may say that you have often been the subjects of my anxious desires. But, fellow travellers to eternity, while I regard your souls as precious as the souls of any other portion of this community, I fear your melancholly condition is that you are not saved, and that you will never be saved if you continue to neglect the institutions of the gospel and forsake the house of God. I do, therefore, at the close of these fifty years, earnestly and affectionately urge you to attend to the things of your peace, and invite you to come to Christ, as your only refuge and only hope.

I see some here to-day who were formerly with us, but who have gone from us to make their home in other places ; some who were once members of this church ; some who, in their youth, were my beloved pupils. I am glad to see your faces once more, and to have this opportunity to greet you before I die. I rejoice in all your prosperity, and welcome you to these

scenes of your childhood and youth. Join with us in praising our fathers' God and our God for all his goodness and grace to this church and this people, and then go to your chosen abodes and chosen employments, if lawful ones, and there act worthily for Christ and his cause in the world. May the communities where you live be better for your example and your influence. And aim equally with those who still abide in the old home of the colony of 1644, to prepare for the greater gathering, when the first settlers and the subsequent settlers of Totoket, with all their descendants of every generation,—all the emigrants and their offspring, spread as they now are, over this broad land, and into the isles of the sea, in South America, in the father-land, in Asia and Africa, too,—shall all meet this God in whom they, and we also, set our hopes,—to give, each for himself, the account of his stewardship; and to receive his reward, for good or for evil, according to the deeds done in the body. How solemn will be that gathering before the judgment seat of Christ! How rapturous, if we are found among the ransomed of the Lord, who shall return and come to Zion, with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; if we, on that day, shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away! And how overwhelming, if we,—if any, either pastor or people, of the dwellers on these hills and in these vales,—any of the worshippers within these and your former hallowed walls, shall then fall under the frowns of a rejected Savior and into the everlasting ruin which awaits all who have neglected the great salvation.

It now only remains, that with affection and hope, and yet with fear, I pray that the angel of God's presence may go before you still, and lead you into greater religious prosperity. * * * *

Your fathers set their hope in God and clave to his word, and he prospered them. Ponder on the things he has done for them, for their children and their children's children, and let the review induce you also, my beloved people, to set your hope in God; and do not forget his works, but keep his commandments and do them. So shall it be well with you. The God of love and peace be with you. The God of revivals and of salvation bless you, and the spirit of grace rest upon you all—Amen.

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